

**Questions and Answers about *Fast Forward*,
Indiana's Race to the Top Plan
Update 3/12/2010**

General RttT questions

Will the PowerPoint and audio from the 1/20/10 WebEx be posted online?

The WebEx will not be posted online, but the PowerPoint and audio are available at this link:
<http://media.doe.in.gov/WebEx/tbennett/2010-01-20-Racetothetop/index.html>.

On the last slide of the WebEx, it says "Identify lowest 25% of schools." Should this say "Identify lowest 5% of schools" or "Identify lowest 25% of students?"

The slide should say both "Identify lowest 25% of students" and "Identify lowest 5% of schools."

Does the association president's signature void the collective bargaining law?

No.

Did the Indiana Federation of Teachers and/or Indiana State Teachers' Association sign the Fast Forward application for the state of Indiana?

No. The only signatures required on the application were the Governor's, Dr. Bennett's and the Attorney General's.

Is there a penalty for opting out after the work plan has been finalized?

In the event Indiana wins a RttT award, IDOE will provide a sample work plan. The sample plan will address any penalties for termination.

Will more administrators be hired under RttT to allow for the implementation of full annual evaluations?

No.

Work Plan

What happens if the teachers' association did not sign onto the MOU?

Participating LEAs will have another opportunity to secure an association signature during the work plan phase (after the U.S. Department of Education announces awards). The LEA will need the signature of the local teachers' association leader (in addition to the LEA superintendent and the local school board president) on the work plan in order to participate in RttT. If a LEA is unable to secure all three signatures (two for charters), it will not be able to participate in *Fast Forward*.

May the district enlist the help of the association in the development of the work plan if the association did not sign the MOU?

Yes and the association's signature will be required on the work plan in order for the LEA to participate.

How does the IDOE plan to handle opposition from teachers' associations?

IDOE has been working closely with the teachers' associations and looks forward to continuing to partner with them on a successful implementation of RttT reforms.

Will the work plan need the LEA's full school board approval?

Similar to the Partnership Agreement, the LEA will need the signature of the local school board president (in addition to the LEA superintendent and the local teachers' association leader) on the work plan in order to participate in RttT.

Where can we find the specific criteria required for the work plan? Will a template be provided? When will LEA work plan guidelines be issued, and when will the work plan be used?

RttT awards will be announced in April 2010. If Indiana is awarded funds, IDOE will produce a sample work plan as soon as possible after the announcement. IDOE is in the process of developing a framework which will assist LEAs in drafting work plans. IDOE does not yet know the deadline when work plans will be due, as the timeline will be determined by the date of the RttT award.

Will funding be available for development of the work plan or only for implementation?

Because an LEA will not be considered a Participating LEA until a work plan has been completed and approved by IDOE, funding will only be available for implementation. IDOE plans to assist LEAs as much as possible through the provision of a work plan framework; this should alleviate any funding concerns with regard to work plan development.

Should the LEA wait until the sample work plan is available to begin working on it? (Updated 2/25/10)

This is a decision for each LEA, but IDOE will provide significant assistance in this area. Should a LEA determine it best to wait for IDOE's framework, it would still be advisable for staff at the LEA to familiarize themselves with the *Fast Forward* plan.

Funding

What is the new allocation of the Title I portion of RttT? (Updated 2/25/10)

The distribution percentages of half of any Race to the Top award, based on relative shares of Title I funding, can be found at www.doe.in.gov/fastforward.

Why are there decreases in the current Title I amount from the amounts released in December? (Updated 2/25/10)

In creating the December list of distributions based on relative shares of Title I, IDOE calculated shares based solely on regular Title I distributions. After reading further guidance from the USDOE, IDOE calculated the new list based on regular distributions plus stimulus funding. This new calculation resulted in a higher percentage of the total for some LEAs and a lower percentage for others.

What is the effect of RttT on Title I funding?

Currently, Race to the Top does not affect Title I funding.

Is the distribution based on relative shares of Title I determined by the normal Title I formula or the formula provided in the Stimulus package? (Updated 2/25/10)

It is determined by regular Title I distribution plus stimulus distribution.

How will discretionary portion of RttT funds be dispersed?

A detailed budget is provided in the *Fast Forward* Appendix, available at www.doe.in.gov/fastforward.

Will IDOE provide a cost estimate for schools to receive common core assessments and a cost estimate for schools to receive the technology needed for on-line common core assessments?

Beginning on page 81 in the *Fast Forward* Appendix is a table outlining the associated budget for transition to common assessments. The link to the appendix is http://www.doe.in.gov/fastforward/docs/indianas_fast_forward_plan_appendix.pdf.

Of the \$500 million, will schools only get roughly \$20 million of it? (Updated 2/25/10)

No. One-half of any RttT award to Indiana will go directly to Participating LEAs based on relative shares of Title I. There is some confusion around a roughly \$20 million figure referenced in the *Fast Forward* budget. This is an amount, above and beyond that one-half distribution, that will go to LEAs. Details are provided in the full budget document which can be found starting on page 65 in the appendix.

If funds will be distributed through Title I, does that limit the uses of the funds to Title I schools only? And, does that limit the reform to only Title I schools?

Half of the RttT award will be distributed to LEAs based on their relative shares of Title I. Use of these dollars is not restricted to Title I activities but must be in accordance with *Fast Forward*. The remaining RttT funds are designated for statewide reform initiatives, so each Participating LEA will benefit from this funding.

Will the 50% of funds over which the IDOE has control be awarded on a first-come/first-served basis, or will there be an application window? (Updated 2/25/10)

The funds will not be distributed on a first-come/first-served basis, but there will be a deadline by which each LEA must submit its work plan (IDOE will provide a framework) to implement RttT reforms in compliance with the *Fast Forward* plan.

Will this be like Title I funds where the LEA will share the funds with the local private and parochial schools?

No.

Is this one time money?

Yes. Race to the Top is a one-time grant to support education reform over the next four years, or as soon as the money is spent.

If we create a successful work plan, when will the local district receive the money for the work plan?

The IDOE will not know the distribution schedule until after the award is announced in April 2010.

Because this is federal money, will the supplement versus supplant rule apply?

No. Relative share of Title I is merely the basis for distribution. The accounting, reporting, and program requirements will be identified in the work plan and final agreement between IDOE and each LEA.

Will schools receiving RttT funds based on relative shares of Title I have to implement all the aspects of the Fast Forward Plan to receive the funding?

Yes. Each participating LEA must produce a work plan (IDOE will provide a framework) to implement RttT reforms in compliance with the *Fast Forward* plan. IDOE will work with each participating LEA to determine whether any *Fast Forward* elements (e.g. turnaround) are inapplicable to the LEA.

Who will pay for the purchase and maintenance of the software needed to implement this system?

Participating LEAs will receive funding for implementation of *Fast Forward*.

Is there any added value to our State application by implementing a state-wide teacher/principal evaluation?

Yes. The Great Teachers and Leaders section of the RttT application is worth 28%, and as such represents the single greatest portion of the possible points a state can receive in the scoring rubric. The USDOE clearly states evidence of student learning must be significant criterion for teacher/leader effectiveness and must be a key consideration for evaluation of teachers and leaders.

What is the correlation between the bottom 5% list and RttT funds?

If a state is awarded a RttT grant, some funds may be directed to the lowest achieving schools.

If a LEA does not participate in RttT, but has a school in the bottom 5%, will it indirectly receive RttT funds?

All LEAs, regardless of whether they participate or not, will benefit from aspects of *Fast Forward*.

General questions on the plan

Who will be building the data systems and will corporations be funded to upgrade their technology separately from the RttT funds or is that one area the RttT will fund?

IDOE will build or contract for the building of data systems. Participating LEAs will be able to use RttT funding for technology upgrades consistent with *Fast Forward*.

If an LEA signs up for RttT and does not receive any funds, is it still bound to RttT reform measures?

Some portions of the State's plan will apply to all LEAs (such as professional development offerings, etc.), and others will only apply to Participating LEAs. (Please refer to the *Fast Forward* plan for specific details.) However, President Obama indicated in his State of the Union address his plans to mirror RttT reforms in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. To that end, LEAs should anticipate moving toward these reforms at some point in the future as directed by federal law.

What are the incentives teachers will be provided?

This is something that can be addressed during the work plan phase.

How much local control will individual school districts have regarding hiring, curriculum, staff and professional development? How much local control will be ceded to federal and state government?

Control will remain essentially the same. Through *Fast Forward*, though, IDOE will be able to provide extensive tools, like professional development, that LEAs will be able to utilize to implement the reforms.